

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
February 26, 2003, 4:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Pat Bryant  
Dave Clingan  
Madhu Vedak  
Cindy Felsten  
Barbara Stevens  
Jay Myers  
Gil Palmer  
Marie Schroeder  
Joan Chelton  
Dick Underdahl-Peirce

**ABSENT**

Chrystal Pushor

Commissioner Palmer brought the meeting to order.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith, Secretary Cindy Winterrowd

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

**The November minutes were approved as written.** (No meeting in Dec. 2002 and Jan. 2003 was unofficial due to lack of quorum).

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

No change from last report.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Tinsley distributed annual dinner flyers for Commissioners to post/distribute.

The newspaper & media have received the information on the dinner. Other press releases will be sent out following selection of the Laws Award winner and then again after the essay winners are selected.

There were substantially fewer essays submitted this year. Director Tinsley was disappointed and not sure why there was a reduction in entries. She explained that she may try aligning the contest with Indiana standards for next year's contest. This might be a tool to promote the contest to the teachers. Director Tinsley encouraged Commissioners to come by the office and read essays. She reported to Commissioners the concerns staff had this year after looking at a few essays. There seemed to be a lack of education around African American history, grammar, sentence structure, etc.

Director Tinsley reported on a curriculum created by the ABA, stating it is a free educational component which is a very structured curriculum & video targeted to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students about how to get along with others different from you.

Commissioners could take it into the schools and be able to present the materials.

Director Tinsley stated that after the annual dinner, she may suggest to the Executive Committee that they devote an entire full Commission meeting to reviewing the curriculum.

#### **ANNUAL DINNER:**

Director Tinsley reviewed some of the Commissioners concerns following last year's dinner. She will be reviewing those with the Holiday Inn staff when arranging for the dinner menu.

Commissioners whose terms are expiring have indicated their interest in continuing to City Council Liaison Hawes.

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION:**

**The slate of officers was presented: Chairperson, Commissioner Palmer; Vice Chairperson, Joan Chelton; Secretary, Chrystal Pushor; Treasurer, Pat Bryant. No additional nominations were submitted from the floor. The vote was unanimous for each position.**

#### **LAWS AWARD SELECTION:**

Commissioner Palmer reported on the Executive Committee's discussion, process and conclusion for the Laws Award. Sixteen letters of nomination were received for two nominees. The Commission staff, both Deputy Director and the Director, read the nomination letters, reviewed the Laws Award criteria and made a recommendation to the Executive Committee that both nominees be selected as the 2003 recipients of the William R. Laws Human Rights Award, as both nominees had initiated or sponsored specific programs that met the written criteria for the Award. The Executive Committee's recommendation to the Full Commission is to give the Award to both nominees. Chairperson Palmer encouraged discussion prior to entertaining a motion. Discussion ensued.

**Commissioner Myers made the motion to accept and approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee which is to award the Laws Award to both nominees, Mayor Fred Armstrong and Senator Robert Garton. Commissioner Underdahl-Peirce seconded the motion. Commissioners Myers, Bryant, Palmer, Underdahl-Peirce and Clingan voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Chelton, Felsten, Schroeder, Stevens, and Vedak opposed the nomination.** Director Tinsley stated that she had contacted Commissioner Pushor before and after the Executive Committee meeting as Commissioner Pushor is in California, and Pushor was in favor of both nominees receiving the award. Commissioner Underdahl-Peirce stated that votes from Commissioners who are not at the meeting should not be counted when they have not had the benefit of hearing the discussion with other Commissioners. Discussion ensued. Because of the tie vote on the motion, Chairperson Palmer stated that the motion failed, and he entertained other

motions. **Commissioner Vedak made the motion to give the William R. Laws Award to Mayor Fred Armstrong. Commissioner Schroeder seconded.**

Commissioner Myers stated that he supported the nominee, and was initially going to vote only for Mayor Armstrong, but was convinced by the Executive Committee's recommendation and believed both nominees met the criteria and that he should not vote in favor of this motion when he voted in favor of the last motion. Commissioner Underdahl-Peirce stated that while Mayor Armstrong may meet the criteria, he did not believe the Commission should make this Award during an election year. Commissioners Clingan, Palmer, Vedak, Bryant, and Schroeder voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Chelton, Felsten, Myers, Stevens and Underdahl-Peirce opposed the motion. Motion failed because of a tie vote. **Commissioner Stevens made the motion to accept the**

**recommendation of giving the award to both nominees but to add a new criterion for the future that a person in public office cannot be considered. Commissioner Vedak seconded the motion.** Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Vedak, in response to the discussion, withdrew her second and Commissioner Stevens withdrew her motion. **Commissioner Stevens made a new motion that in the future we will have a criterion that states the Commission will not consider a person while he or she is holding public office. Commissioner Vedak seconded the motion.** Discussion ensued.

Commissioners Vedak, Felsten, Chelton & Stevens voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Bryant, Clingan, Myers, Palmer, Underdahl-Peirce, and Schroeder opposed the motion. Motion failed. **Commissioner Chelton made**

**the motion to not have a Laws Award winner this year. Commissioner Felsten seconded the motion.** Commissioners Stevens, Chelton and Felsten voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Bryant, Clingan, Myers, Palmer, Underdahl-Peirce, Schroeder, and Vedak opposed the motion. Motion failed.

The discussion ended with Commissioners not being able to come to a majority consensus on a vote for a winner or winners for the Award. **Commissioner Chelton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Clingan.** The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.